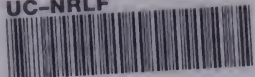


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SPIKENARD



# SPIKENARD

A BOOK OF  
DEVOTIONAL  
LOVE-POEMS

BY

LAURENCE  
HOUSMAN



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GRANT RICHARDS

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*L*OVE bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,  
    Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack  
    From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."  
    Love said, "You shall be he!"  
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my Dear,  
    I cannot look on Thee."  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,  
"Who made the eyes but I?"

GEORGE HERBERT.



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# SPIKENARD.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

A DISPUTATION BETWEEN CHRIST  
AND THE HUMAN FORM.

*(For the Feast of the Nativity.)*

COMEST Thou peaceably, O Lord?  
“Yea, I am Peace!

Be not so fearful to afford  
Thy Maker room! for I am the Reward  
To which all generations of increase  
Looking did never cease.

“Down from amid dark wings of storm  
I set My Feet  
To earth. Will not My earth grow warm  
To feel her Maker take the form  
He made, when now, Creation's purpose meet,  
Man's body is to be God's Mercy-seat?”

Lord, I am foul : there is no whole  
 Fair part in me  
 Where Thou canst deign to be !  
 This form is not Thy making, since it stole  
 Fruit from the bitter Tree.  
 "Yet still thou hast the griefs to give in toll  
 That I may test the sickness of man's soul."

O Lord, my work is without worth !  
 I am afraid,  
 Lest I should mar the blissful Birth.  
 Quoth Christ, " Ere seas had shores, or earth  
 Foundations laid,  
 My Cross was made ! "

" Naught canst thou do that was not willed  
 By Love to be,  
 To bring the Work to pass through Me.  
 No knee  
 Stiffens, or bends before My Sov'reignty,  
 But from the world's beginning hath fulfilled  
 Its choice betwixt the valleyed and the hilled.  
 For both, at one decree,  
 My Blood was spilled."

Yet canst Thou use these sin-stained hands ?  
 " These hands," quoth Christ,  
 " Of them I make My need :

Since they sufficed to forge the bands  
 Wherein I hunger, they shall sow the seed !  
 And with bread daily they shall feed  
 My Flesh till, bought and bound, It stands  
 A Sacrifice to bleed."

Lord, let this house be swept and garnished first !  
 For fear lest sin  
 Do there look in,  
 Let me shut fast the windows : lest Thou thirst,  
 Make some pure inner well of waters burst :  
 For no sweet water can man's delving win—  
 Earth is so curst.  
 Also bar up the door : Thou wilt do well  
 To dwell, whilst with us, anchorite in Thy cell.

Christ said " Let be : leave wide  
 All ports to grief!  
 Here when I knock I will not be denied  
 The common lot of all that here abide ;  
 Were I so blinded, I were blind in chief :  
 How should I see to bring the blind relief?"

Wilt Thou so make Thy dwelling ? Then I fear  
 Man, after this, shall dread to enter here :  
 For all the inner courts will be so bright,  
 He shall be dazzled with excess of light,  
 And turn, and flee !

“ But from his birth I will array him right,  
And lay the temple open for his sight,  
And say to help him, as I bid him see :  
‘ This is for thee ! ’ ”





## THE SWADDLING BANDS.

O LOVE, when human sense first touched Thine eyes,  
Bidding them tell Thee naught, save through disguise

Of specious form, and close embodiment,  
Seemed it not sad that life such darkness lent,  
While to Thy new-born brain the wonder grew  
How earthly sight could so shut out the Heavenly view?

For Thou from the embrace of Mary's heart  
Must turn and see her play her earthly part :  
Can that poor robe, and this poor peasant face,  
Cover the highly favoured, full of Grace?

And can this weary elder Thou dost see  
The Heaven-taught Joseph be?

And in this cabin'd space  
Of stable rock  
Does not the whole world flock  
To worship at Thy knee?

Now, this first time, Thine Eyes must look on walls :  
Where Thy Hands cannot reach  
Hands stretch and do beseech ;  
Where Thine Ear cannot hear, Thine earth for succour  
calls !

Oh, little Heart,  
     Beat fast, and grow !  
 The whole world's smart  
     Through Thee, one day, must flow.  
 Oh, childish Ears, attend,  
 Being friend to all men's fears !  
     Oh, childish Eyes,  
     Would ye of man be wise,  
 Ye must the channel be to all men's tears !

So wait, and learn Thy strict estate,  
 Until to Thee this earth commits its fate !  
     Each day a little knowledge brings :  
     The shepherd's crook, the crown of kings,  
 In time shall prove Thee great,  
 When Hand and Head bear up their awful weight.  
     Now round Thee, Holy Child,  
     Life dawns in darkness mild :  
 Out in the starried night a Herald sings  
     Of Nature reconciled.  
 Thou canst not see that Star, nor hear those pastoral  
     wings :  
 Yet first the shepherds come to gaze, and then the kings !

## GOD'S MOTHER.

*(The Annunciation of Our Lady.)*

A GARDEN bower in bower  
Grew waiting for God's hour :  
Where no man ever trod,  
This was the Gate of God.

The first bower was red—  
Her lips which "welcome" said.  
The second bower was blue—  
Her eyes that let God through.

The third bower was white—  
Her soul in God's sight.  
Three bowers of love  
Won Christ from Heaven above.

# THE WORD MADE FLESH.

*(Feast of Corpus Christi.)*

O WORD of Life, and Fount of Paradisal speech !  
 O living Coal of fire, from off God's altar !  
 Now, lest they falter,  
 Touch my lips, and teach  
 My tongue to reach  
 Some chaunting echo from the heavenly psalter ;  
 So, with rebound,  
 To glance the hopeful sound  
 Of those sweet symphonies the Ghost-born seven,  
 Though once 'Thou didst confound  
 Man's towering hopes which could not reach to Heaven.

Yet, when the work a ruin, the hope still clung ;  
 Yea, though the belfry, robbed of its clear tongue,  
 Mocked by the winds of God a dead weight swung ;—  
 Still of divided speech the wound stayed new,  
 While still to earth slid the remembering dew  
 Of Heaven who would not all forsake  
 Hearts that at gaze thereon grew like to break.

And though by builders' flaw  
 The Tower was reared in vain,  
 Yet by the same compassionate law  
 Which bids the mountains draw  
 From Heaven's pure womb the rain ;  
 So man's mute ruin, which discord did confound,  
 Drew down the atoning Word that could make concord  
 sound.

And out of Her, whose fresh,  
 Clear soul, well tuned to the Heavenly Mind,  
 Could in angelic tones a meaning find,  
 The Word made Flesh,  
 Quick from the kindling speech of Gabriel,  
 From upmost Heaven came down with us to dwell.

O Virgin-cavern for the Winds of God, O Shrine  
 Of Silence wherein spake the Voice Divine,  
 Till, at Its summons, answering echoes sprang,  
 And laughed to God and sang,  
 While all impregnate with prophetic thrill  
 Thy Word-attending Womb began to fill,—  
 Thou sweet mute Mother, hail !  
 In the expressive silence of whose breast,  
 Discord did fail  
 To drive God's Word from Its appointed rest !

Flesh from thy mothering flesh,  
 Speech from thy speech,  
 Shaping the world afresh  
 Its Maker through thy mould His goal must reach.  
 Word upon word,  
 Wherein men's thoughts lie blurred,  
 Taught by thy tongue He heard.  
 Oh, strange compassionate strife  
 Of Wisdom, when  
 Thou to the Word of Life  
 Must teach the word of men !

So, since He stooped to reach  
 Through thee His mother-speech,  
 And since thy gracious voice set open then  
 His Ear on earth to hear His fellow men,  
 Must not thy lips be those  
 Which His compassionate Love can never wish to close ?  
 They taught into His Ear  
 God's Name, His Father dear ;  
 They are the lips of all He most must wish to hear.

Therefore, Queen Mary, reach  
 His Heart with human speech ;  
 And with most heavenward sound His Love for us  
 beseech !

## THE CLOUD OF WITNESS.

*(Feast of the Ascension.)*

WHEN Christ His Being to man's body bowed,  
 Veiling therein His glory as in cloud,  
 Then all the Heavenly race,  
 Deprivéd for a space  
 Of Him the expression of His Father's Face,  
 Saw darkly as in a glass  
 The Godhead pass,  
 Changed to a visage human in compare,  
 Wearing no more the light of that celestial air.

So on the immortal sense,  
 Which is to God's Presence  
 As coloured rays from Light whence all light flows,  
 Fell shadowings, and the word  
 Of severance first was heard—  
 "Love is gone hence,  
 New night  
 Withdraws Him from our sight!"  
 Then forthwith rose  
 In the angelic hearts new love to birth,  
 Named Faith, in wonder looking down to earth.

So through the cloud which parted Him from them  
 Brightness came down to us at Bethlehem :

On that fair night

When God, Who unto angels speaks by light,  
 Out of the Word made Flesh for human sight.

O Cloud,

O Witness of the Father's Glory, bowed  
 Unto our darkness, Brightness of our night,  
 Open to us the blindness of our sight !

Unloose the shroud

Of mortal sense wherewith we are endowed ;  
 Now Thou art melted in the eternal rays  
 Of Light made perfect, by Celestial ways,  
 Being parted in a glory from man's gaze !

How can we lack that grace, and not be grieved  
 Till Thou returnest, Whom the cloud received  
 From all Thy loving watchers that believed ?  
 Was not full faith found then on Olivet,  
 When faces of Thy friends watched skywards ? Yet

All those dear eyes grew dim,

They could not look on Him :

Nor faith, nor love retain,

Him that had cast aside all mortal stain.





Into the cloud  
He passed : He that had bowed  
Into the bosom of our night,  
Being Witness to us of the Father's Light ;—  
A Light for evermore  
Too fair for mortal sight !  
The Heaven-sent Sun that wrapped Himself in cloud  
And made thick darkness be His covering and His shroud,  
Had won His way back to the everlasting shore  
Where night shall be no more.

Over His Face  
The cloud of witness for a glory grows ;  
Out of man's sight He goes  
Back to the Heavenly place  
To wait the crowning coming of His race.

Then shall the cloud,  
With joyful thunderings loud,  
Grow parted ; and His Sign  
Be seen at length.  
And east and west, and south and north,  
His Word go forth :  
Yea, He shall shine  
Like as the sun in strength !

# LOVE, THE TEMPTER.

(*Season of Lent.*)

OH, tempt not me! I love too well this snare  
Of silken cords.

Nay, Love, the flesh is fair;  
So tempt not me! This earth affords  
Too much delight;  
Withdraw Thee from my sight,  
Lest my weak soul break free  
And throw me back to Thee!

Thy Face is all too marred. Nay, Love, not I—  
I did not that! Doubtless Thou hadst to die:  
Others did faint for Thee; but I faint not.  
Only a little while hath sorrow got  
The better of me now; for Thou art grieved,  
Thinking I need Thee. Oh, Christ, lest I fall  
Weeping between Thy Feet, and give Thee all:  
Oh, Christ, lest love condemn me unreprieved  
Into Thy bondage, be it not believed  
That Thou hast need of *me*!

Dost Thou not know  
 I never turned aside to mock Thy Woe?  
 I had respect to Thy great love for men :  
 Why wilt Thou, then,  
     Question of each new lust—  
 “Are these not ashes, and is this not dust?”  
 Ah, Love, Thou hast not eyes  
     To see how sweet it is !  
 Each for himself be wise :  
     Mock not my bliss !  
 Ere Thou cam’st troubling, was I not content ?  
     Because I pity Thee, and would be glad  
     To go mine own way, and not leave Thee sad,  
 Is all my comfort spent ?

Go Thine own ways, nor dream Thou needest me !  
 Yet if, again, Thou on the bitter Tree  
 Wert hanging now, with none to succour Thee  
     Or run to quench Thy sudden cry of thirst,  
     Would not I be the first—  
 Ah, Love, the prize !—  
 To lift one cloud of suffering from Thine Eyes ?

    Oh, Christ, let be !  
 Stretch not Thine ever-pleading Hands thus wide,  
 Nor with imperious gesture touch Thy Side !  
 Past is Thy Calvary. By the Life that died,  
     Oh, tempt not me !

Nay, if Thou weepest, then must I weep too,  
Sweet Tempter, Christ! Yet what can *I* undo,  
    I, the undone, the undone,  
    To comfort Thee, God's Son?  
Oh, draw me near, and, for some lowest use,  
    That I may be  
    Lost and undone in Thee,  
Me from mine own self loose!

## BEFORE CONFESSION.

*(Ash Wednesday.)*

**A**S the foul flesh lays by the hindering robe,  
 Letting the water probe  
 And purge each stain,  
 Till with that sweet medicinal receipt  
 From face to feet  
 The body is made sane ;  
 So, from my shamefaced soul, do I aside  
 All covering lay (who have so long denied  
 Thy cleansing Power), to be purified.

Late though I come, at last  
 The dress I cast  
 Of my deceit, which hid  
 Till late  
 My soiled estate :  
 All that I did; I did  
 In secrecy.  
 Lord, in my secret places cleanse Thou me !

As to the flesh laid bare, the water, led  
 By its own laws of life, bids cleansing spread

With subtle press and intimate caress :  
 And with compelling weight,  
 Doth gravitate  
 Round all which passively submits thereto,  
     Leaving untouched no part ;  
     So to my heart,  
 Stripped of itself, Thine utmost healing do !  
 So from its falsehood wash it with Thy truth :  
 And from lust-loving lave it in Thy ruth :  
     And with pure Waters pitiful, whose art  
 The virtue bears of an inborn embrace,  
 Wash Thou the soil of shame from off my face !

Against all outward secrecy I pray,  
 Let all such secrecy be put away !  
 Since Thou in all my secrets seest me,  
 Thine, not the world's, let all my secrets be !  
 So, in Thy secret Ear when they are named,  
 I shall be naked but yet not ashamed :  
 And my great gain be this dear privacy—  
 When I shut out the world, to shut in Thee !

## THE SOUL'S BONDAGE TO CHRIST.

*(Holy Cross Day.)*

O LIVING, dying Love, whom death set free,  
 Not if I would  
 Can I now lose the good  
 Thou gavest me :  
 Never unburdened may my conscience be  
 To find—Thy Grace withstood—  
 Her chambers swept of Thee !

Thou, in my blood, dost bleed :  
 Yea, even from the seed  
 Of sin, Love's cause to plead,  
 Thy Face  
 Finds space  
 To spring reproach from each rank, bitter weed !

Dear mystery of Love, which so decreed  
 By strong design to win  
 Sure entrance in  
 To man's most secret need,  
 Thou for our piteous sakes  
 Becamest Sin !

So when temptation wakes,  
 Thy Cross's form it takes,  
 Making each sinner see  
 His sin mount up to be  
 Thy Calvary!

Would I might sin, sweet Christ, and cease to know  
 That we are kin and share each other's woe!  
 Would I might be so low,  
 So low,  
 That I might let Thee go,  
 And force Thee to forsake  
 The heart that made Thine ache!  
 Thou sayest "No!  
 For this cause slain,  
 In this My conquest lies—  
 Never canst thou again  
 So cover up thine eyes!

"Stained with thy stain,  
 My Head shall bow unto the self-same pain,  
 And thou shalt know  
 In thine own flesh the likeness of My Woe!"

Love, Joy, and Gentleness,  
 To Thee I press!  
 Meekness, long-suffering,  
 To Thee I cling!



Peace, Temperance, and Faith,  
Against Whom is no law,  
Being the one All-in-all  
To which all flesh must draw,  
So wounded in the house of all Thy friends,  
Teach them by Wounds, to make Thee fair amends,  
Till all self-wounding ends !

THE SOUL COMPLAINETH AGAINST THE  
BODY, AND IS ANSWERED.

*(Feast of the Circumcision.)*

UNDER so many shadows I am laïd,  
Amid these builded walls that flesh hath made  
Fivefold about me—every sense a shade,  
How shall I see Light in a light so dim ?  
Windows away from God are walls from Him !  
Of walls, then, am I made.

These things I do,  
These other things I see,  
Shape not for me  
Aught that I dare name true.  
Rather they seem to be  
Hard riddles that, with sloth and pain,  
I must again  
Undo.

How shall mine eyes  
Things, that they love exceedingly, despise ?  
How shall my flesh defeat  
All things my heart names sweet ?

Nay, how shall I be wise  
When all my brain, led by light folly, lies ;  
Nor can escape deceit,  
Save by disguise ;  
Itself at once the cheated, and the cheat !

O dust, have faith according to the term  
Of this life's lease ! Ere the corrupting worm  
Have power to destroy the dust thou art !  
Ere the dark rust  
Of death can clog the engine of thy heart !  
Great is thine honour, though thou walk in night ;  
For fringes of thy darkness feel the Light  
Which was ordained to be  
When God, the Just,  
From shadow shaping thee,  
Put trust  
In dust.

## THE SOUL'S OFFERINGS.

*(Holy Thursday.)*

O CHRIST, first let me know  
     How sweet life's best can be :  
 Then call me to forego  
     Its sweets for Thee !

First, passion let me taste  
     Which all men praise or pray :  
 Then bid me cast in haste  
     The prize away.

From death first make me shrink  
     In bodily strong dread :  
 Then, then the cup to drink,  
     And then the bed !

## THE HOLY FACE.

*(Good Friday.)*

**O** SEA of sorrow, suffering made divine !  
 O Deep, which dost contain,  
 To which doth flow  
 More than was ever wrought or dreamed of woe  
 By mortal brain !  
 O sacred Main,  
 Where mine  
 And all men's pain  
 Reflected shine !  
 Thou Holy Face,  
 Image and Impress of the Father's Grace,  
 Where visibly doth move  
 The Holy Spirit spreading Wings of Love ;  
 Compassionate and fair  
 Attend my prayer !

O Healing Face, to all mankind most kind,  
 Teach me to find  
 Thee, lest I wander blind !

For as the river seeks the sea,  
 And as its rest the rain,  
 So seeks my face for Thee,  
 So pleads my prayer the pain  
 That pleads through Thee :  
 " Behold, and see,  
 Is there a sorrow that has no part in me ? "

So in Thy pain I seek  
 The pains that hold me weak :  
 Oh, where  
 In that dear Visage marred beyond compare  
 Is set my care ?

Each languid Lid  
 Is vigil worn because of things I did :  
 Is robbed of sleep  
 And power  
 Because I would not keep  
 The watch one little hour !  
 His Brow is marred and bound  
 With thorns because I found  
 Pure thoughts too hard to prize !  
 Because mine eyes  
 Feasted on vain desire,  
 And put their trust  
 Where a disguise of fire  
 Made covering for lust :

Therefore in Him  
 Sight weigheth faint and dim !  
 Because my lips found fruit  
     Too pleasant to the taste,  
     Wherefrom came waste  
 Wherein all bitterness hath root,  
 Therefore His Mouth  
 Is parched and full of drouth,  
     While He in patience doth assuage my haste !

O Sea of Griefs divine,  
     Deep Wave of care,  
 Ocean of Love, where all God's stars do shine ;  
     Over whose Face perpetually doth thrill  
     The Quickening Spirit of the Godhead's Will,  
 Moving until the Water be made Wine !  
     To Thee all prayer  
     Turns still, and finds most fair  
 This Face of Love, thus marred beyond compare :  
     For over It are wrought  
     All shades of human thought :  
 Grief, and strong lamentation, and sharp pain,  
 In strength cast down and raised, in loss made gain,  
 In weakness borne, in weariness out-worn,  
 In death, defeat and scorn.  
     Oh, Face most fair,  
 Spring-Tide of God, flood all my griefs in Thee  
 Till, as the water covereth the sea,  
 Thou coverest me !

TO THE PENITENT THIEF ON  
CALVARY.

WHEN shame and darkness covered Him and thee,  
     What didst thou see,  
 O thou great penitent of Calvary,  
     That thou couldst beg this boon as thy reward  
     For suffering?—"When Thou comest to Thy King-  
         dom, Lord,  
 Remember me!"

In that most darkest hour,  
     Of hatred born,  
 When Satan's power  
     Showed Love held up to scorn,  
     What way  
     To thee came strength to pray?—  
 "Lord, when Thy Kingdom cometh unto Thee,  
 Remember me!"

Above thy head the darkness did not rend  
     To kindle thought;  
     No healing sign was wrought  
 About that death-place of earth's dying Friend,  
 To tell beholders, "This is not the end!"



Thou through the veil  
 Didst gaze  
 Into the centre of all Time's amaze :  
 Thy tongue ere Easter greetings cried " All Hail ! "

O tongue, whereon such fires of faith were found,  
 O most triumphant sound  
 Of prophecy that ever fell from man  
 Since Time began,  
 That, with its dying breath,  
 Hailed Life in death,  
 And named the Victor in the Victim bound !

Therefore to thee,  
 Strong Saint, I make my plea,  
 Pray lest I tempt my fate !  
 Lest with a soul too dead,  
 Drawn down to my last bed,  
 I have not eyes to see  
 Beyond mine own gross darkness covering me !  
 Too late, too late,  
 For my sad soul's defence  
 Were death-bed penitence !  
 Only for thy clear soul that hour sufficed  
 To pierce the rift, and bid the darkness lift ;  
 All we like thieves have stolen our days from Christ,  
 And think with late avowal that guilt to shift,  
 But at the last can bring no recompensing gift.



O Light in a dark place,  
Show not too fair a light !  
Lest thy strong suppliant face  
Draw weaker souls to night ;  
And they, in their dark need,  
Have not such light to plead.

Therefore my prayer to thee,  
Pray thou for me,  
Lest at the last  
Self-knowledge hold me fast  
To sins I see !  
So, while I draw strong breath,  
Pray lest I, brought to death,  
Die, and fall short of thee !

## THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM.

*(Easter Eve.)*

WHEN Thou art come into Thy Kingdom, Lord,  
Remember me !

Strong Word of Life, holding the two-edged sword,

What is it bars Thy Kingdom back from Thee ?

Wherefore Thy Reign on earth may I not see ?

Here, like an Olivet, Thy Holy Board

In wedding raiment waits,

And round Thy gates

Kneels Faith and prays " Let will on earth accord

With Heaven's, O Bread of Angels, Blood outpoured !

" Dost thou believe, O child of grief ? "

O Lord, I would believe ; help Thou mine unbelief !

" Dost thou believe that Jesus, Whom

God covered in the Virgin's womb,

Took on Himself the form of fallen man,

And, sinless, bore the sinner's ban,

And, fellow to the peace within,

Felt pain—the punishment of sin—

And, veiling from Himself the Light,  
Of man's five senses bore the night ?

Dost thou believe a blessed Maiden,

By sin unleavenéd,

Once went God-laden ?—

And canst thou not receive

That through this hallowed and unleavened Bread  
God's Heaven can be spread ?

“Dost thou believe the Lord of Life, Whose Breath  
Gives being, could bow and enter Death,  
And to that flesh, which covered Him as cloud,  
Take on mortality to be His shroud ;  
And that the tomb,

At night's tremendous nod,

Quaked not in giving room

To Him the Eternal God ?—

And canst thou not believe Him when He saith  
That, by the words which wore His living Breath,  
He, to this Bread

Coming, can make His bed ?

What ! wouldst thou have the hands of hate more strong

To do Him wrong,

Than praying hands, in innocence washed white,

To do Him right ?

For if the grave embowered the Lord of Light,  
Holding Him slain and dumb,

May not His Altar feel His living Footsteps come ?

“Dost thou believe

That He can break

The fountains of the Deep, and cleave

The clouds of Heaven, and bid the mountains shake,

And the dark furrow-field of sleep to heave

Its dead to light?—And canst thou not believe,

Because the attendant signs are all too dumb,

That, by a mystery, this Bread may be His Kingdom  
come?

“Dost thou believe Christ’s Reign will ever come?—

Then what is it which bars Christ’s Reign from thee?

Thou seest in thine own self the sum

Of hard denial! Whence look and see

Here on My Altar what My Reign might be!

This daily bread

Wherewith man’s flesh is fed—

’Tis by self-will he eats, and finds not Me.

Were two or three

Together, in their midst there would I be!

“My earth

Lies in the womb of Time, a struggling birth.

Knoweth the child unborn whence comes the strength

Which bids his life enlarge,

Until at length

The womb in travail renders up her charge?

He knoweth not what walls,

Nor what maternal way  
 Of patient waiting keep him back from day :  
 He knoweth not the large and liberal air  
 That rounds his dark abode :  
 Save through his mother's prayer  
 He hath not looked on God.

“Dost thou believe at last, O child of grief?”  
 Lord I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief!

---

O Thou, our Father ere we came  
 To being, hallowed be Thy Name !  
 Thy Kingdom come : Thy Will be done,  
 Till Heaven and earth be joined as one !  
 For when Thy Will is wrought on earth  
 The second Christ will come to birth ;  
 And this sad earth, which was His tomb,  
 Shall quicken as the Virgin's womb :  
 The rocks shall rend to give Him way  
 And bring the second Easter Day.  
 And east, and west, and south, and north,  
 † His Sign, through all the world gone forth,  
 Shall rest upon both land and sea,  
 Making earth shine like Calvary.  
 And He shall reach out Healing Hands  
 To gather nations and all lands,  
 And open wide, to welcome them,  
 The twelve gates of Jerusalem !

## THE GARDENER.

*(The Feast of St. Mary Magdalene.)*

WHEN fell the uprisen Voice in Mary's ear,  
 She thought that it had been the gardener,  
 Tending the early flowers, who spake to her.

Surely the listening heart had told her right !  
 For He, indeed, to call lost flowers to light  
 Had worked with our first father all the night.

His Eyes, which met the newly risen day,  
 Had gazed on fields of spiritual clay,  
 Where all the imprisoned seed of Adam lay.

From His own Heart which broke He watered them :  
 From thorns which choke He chose His diadem;  
     Till cheered and freed  
     The patriarchal seed  
 Broke into blossom at His raiment's hem,  
     And round His Feet  
     Shed savour sweet  
 Through gardens by Jerusalem.

O Love, when in my day of doom  
The stone of sense from off me rolls,  
Then from this earth, a barren tomb,  
Do Thou, the Gardener of souls,  
Uproot and bear me in Thy Breast,  
And plant me where it please Thee best !



## THE AFTER-PASSION.

*(All Souls' Day.)*

FOUR Wounds Thy living Flesh did take,  
 That out of them a stream might break,  
 And with the living dews of Birth  
 Wash the four corners of the Earth.

Even so, dear Love, ere man grew wise  
 By fruit too goodly to the eyes,  
 Four rivers ran from Paradise.

But when the Lord of Life had died,  
 A deeper wound ran through His Side :  
 That He might pour His Pain beneath,  
 Into the prison-house of Death.

Oh, Mystery, past mortal ken !  
 The Wound that pierced His Body then,  
 He bore not for the world of men.

# A PRAYER FOR THE HEALING OF THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST.

(*For Advent.*)

**I**S not the work done? Nay, for still the Scars  
Are open ; still Earth's Pain stands deified,  
With Arms spread wide :  
And still, like falling stars,  
Its Blood-drops strike the doorposts, where abide  
The watchers with the Bride,  
To wait the final coming of their kin,  
And hear the sound of kingdoms gathering in.

While Earth wears wounds, still must Christ's  
Wounds remain,  
Whom Love made Life, and of Whom Life made  
Pain,  
And of Whom Pain made Death.  
No breath,  
Without Him, sorrow draws ; no feet  
Wax weary, and no hands hard labour bear,  
But He doth wear  
The travail and the heat :

Also, for all things perishing, He saith,  
 “*My* grief, *My* pain, *My* death.”

O kindred Constellation of bright stars,  
 Ye shall not last for aye !  
 Far off there dawns a comfortable day  
 Of healing for those Scars :  
 When, faint in glory, shall be wiped away  
 Each planetary fire,  
 Now, all the aching way the balm of Earth's desire !

For from the healéd nations there shall come  
 The healing touch : the blind, the lamed, the dumb,  
 With sight, and speed, and speech,  
 And ardent reach  
 Of yearning hands shall cover up from sight  
 Those Imprints of a night  
 For ever past. And all the Morians' lands  
 Shall stretch out hands of healing to His Hands.  
 While to His Feet  
 The timid, sweet  
 Four-footed ones of earth shall come and lay,  
 Forever by, the sadness of their day :  
 And, they being healed, healing spring from them.  
 So for the Stem  
 And Rod of Jesse, roots and trees and flowers,  
 Touched with compassionate powers,

Shall cause the thorny Crown  
To blossom down  
Laurel and bay.

So lastly to His Side,  
Stricken when, from the Body that had died,  
Going down He saw sad souls being purified,  
Shall rise, out of the deeps no man  
Can sound or scan,  
The morning star of Heaven that once fell  
And fashioned Hell :—  
Now, star to star  
Mingling to melt where shadeless glories are.

O Earth, seek deep, and gather up thy soul,  
And come from high and low, and near and far,  
And make Christ whole !

## THE VOICE OF ONE, CRYING.

*(For Rogation.)*

O STRENGTH, Whose Face in cloud  
 Is wrapped, Whose Word is mute,  
 Who patiently hath lapt in time Thy travelling Foot,  
 Since silent Thou art King  
 O'er all things high or bowed :—  
 It is the weakest thing  
 On Earth which cries so loud.

O Thou, by that high cry  
 Which I with frailty barb,  
 Pass not in silence by,  
 Too Godlike in Thy garb !  
 But tenderly to speech  
 Bow down I do beseech ;  
 And share, when Thou hast heard,  
 My weakness with Thy Word !

Yea, speak, until Thou see  
 Thy silence pass to me :  
 Even as of old Thy hem strange virtue lent,  
 Till what from Thee was spent

Went in to her who kneeled  
And felt within her womb the bitter issue healed !

So speak, and Thou shalt see  
How quiet I will be,  
O Lord, and like to Thee !  
So still, that after all,  
Thou scarce shalt hear me call :  
My voice within Thy Breast shall grow so small !

## REPAYMENT.

**T**HOU the Cross didst bear :  
     What bear I ?  
 Thou the Thorn didst wear :  
     What wear I ?  
 Thou to death didst dare :  
     What dare I ?  
 Thou for me dost care :  
     What care I !

    Who binds Thee,  
 His own bonds unbinds.  
     Who finds Thee,  
 Plenteous mercy finds.  
 Thou, though love that blinds,  
     Ne'er blinds Thee,  
 Seekest all men's minds.  
     Who minds Thee ?

## THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

*(Conception of the Virgin Mary.)*

THINE earth, O Lord, is full of grief :  
 Thy Heaven is full of love :  
 Tell me what power it was in chief  
 Which drew Thee from above ?

Where Love stands ever, all in all,  
 No entrance is for grief :  
 Say then how came to Thee the call  
 That won the world's relief.

Since nothing mortal grief may move  
 Wholly to cast out fear ;  
 How came the marvel that pure Love  
 Could ever enter here ?

Thou say'st, " This Law ordains relief  
 All other laws above,  
 That Earth cannot contain its grief,  
 Nor Heaven contain its Love :



“ So from the grief which has to mount,  
The Love which has to run,  
There springs and spills a Living Fount,  
Till Earth and Heaven be one.”

## TO ST. FRANCIS.

*(For his license of a wine-shop kept by one of his Tertiaries.)*

O FRANCIS, servant of the Living Vine,  
 Since all that are His branches bear good fruit,  
 So in my spirit let His Life find root,  
 And let me serve Him, sending forth good wine !

For wine God gave, to make man's heart be glad ;  
 Till came the foe who sowed the bitter tares,  
 And gluttony to vaunt her evil wares :  
 Wherefore to-day so many homes are sad.

O thou, His servant, with His patient signs  
 Of suffering in thy feet, and side, and hands,  
 Pray Him with power to purge His pleasant lands,  
 And catch the foxes that have spoiled the vines !

## CHRIST'S LETTER.

## T

*(Feast of the Invention of the Cross.)*

THIS letter, Lord, was shaped for Thee,  
 In it Thine outstretched Arms I see :  
 Thy Life, that all things did aTone,  
 Made it Thy FooTsTool and Thy Throne.  
 It waited for Thee here in earTh,  
 And ran to worship at Thy BirTh ;  
 Gave Thee a sTable for Thy hall,  
 And for a cradle used a sTall ;  
 'Twas in the brightness of the sTar,  
 A light wherever Gentiles are,  
 That led the wise men from afar.

MarTyrs for Thee, and well content,  
 It marked each Holy InnocenT ;  
 And in the close and secret night  
 To EgypT companied Thy FlighT.  
 In Thy Twelfth year with Thee 'twas found,  
 In Temple, with the Doçtors round ;  
 Then, to prepare Thee for Thy DeaTh,  
 Went home with Thee to NazareTh :  
 Next at Thy BapTism to be,

Bearing the SpiriT company,  
That dove-like did descend on Thee.

While through the deserT Thou didst wend,  
Being TempTed, it was twice Thy friend ;  
And when Thou putttest sin to shame,  
It thrust its spear through SaTan's name—  
A living wound, that all may see,  
The SerpenT's end being wrought by Thee,  
Thou shalt fulfil ETerniTty.

Thus was it with Thee in Thy FasT,  
And, when the vigil was well passed,  
With Thine aposTles first and least  
Went with Thee to the marriage-feasT.  
With Thee it stood upon the mounT  
Where PieTy opened clear account ;  
And, with pure blessings for the good,  
Stretched arms in each BeaTiTude :  
And on another mounT, where shone  
Thy Face too fair to look upon  
At Thy Transfiguration.

It witnessed Thee, the mystic HosT,  
First at Thy FeasT take up Thy post,  
When to the Twelve Thou didst present  
Thy Body in the SacramenT.

'Twas with Thee when Thou wast beTrayed,  
And in Thy Trial it wiTness made.  
'Twas in the sTrokes, the 'Thongs that bound,  
The spiTTing, and the Thorns that crowned :

In its own shape it reared for Thee,  
 VicTim and PriesT, the bitter Tree :  
 And, double witness of Thy ThirsT,  
 Stood last in letting Thee be FirsT :  
 Yea, that she too might bear a part,  
 Set sword in Thine own MoTher's hearT.  
 'Twas with Thee in Thy latest BreaTh ;  
 And, when Thy head was bowed to DeaTh,  
 Stayed faithful to the uttermost.  
 Till Thou hadst yielded up the ghosT,  
 Then at Thy Tomb it watched anon,  
 Until the EasTer morning shone  
 Upon Thy ResurrecTion.

'Twas there when, for the last time met,  
 Rested Thy FeeT on OliveT ;  
 But, left a mark for men below,  
 In Thine Ascension did not go.  
 A sign of Thee, whom sighT had lost,  
 It witness gave at PenTecosT :  
 Of Life that DeaTh might not divide  
 With cloven Tongues it prophesied.

Therefore, dear Lord, this letter stands  
 A symbol of Thine ouTsTreTched Hands,  
 To earthly joining Heavenly wiT ;  
 Nor are they SainTs who have not it !  
 That Heaven and Earth more bound may be,  
 Twice does it sign the TriniTy ;

And for close shelter comes to rest  
Midmost upon the FaTher's BreasT.  
Yet still, as if naught else sufficed,  
Stands last in the dear Name of ChrisT  
When Thy dread alTar draws my feet,  
I hear it bid me "Take and eaT" :  
And first and last it guards my TrusT,  
That Thou wilt raise me from the dusT.

## DEDICATION.

WHEN I have ended, then I see  
     How far my words come short of Thee :  
 Speech heavenly cannot live on earthly lips,  
 Pure thoughts borne down to language bear eclipse.

Ah, Christ, what harmony will that be then,  
 When, in Thy likeness, all the thoughts of men  
     Grow satisfied, in silence serving Thee !  
     For now 'tis difference that makes us be  
 Each clamorous his own meaning to express :  
 But then all minds will wear the marriage-dress,  
     Moving in meet processional degree.

Oh, Christ, come quick, and from the body loose  
 The long distraction of each present use !  
 The hands that handle, and the lips that taste  
 Not at Thy banquet, work but so much waste,  
 And at sad lingering make heedless haste !

Some day, when love of self hath lost its lust  
Of living in me, Thou wilt come, I trust,  
And tread my heart to Paradisal dust :  
Making me glad, ere last forgetting fall,  
To know myself for naught, and Christ for all in all.





## SPIKENARD.

*AS one who came with ointments sweet,  
 Abettors to her fleshly guilt,  
 And brake and poured them at Thy Feet,  
 And worshipped Thee with spikenard spilt :  
 So from a body full of blame,  
 And tongue too deeply versed in shame,  
 Do I pour speech upon Thy Name.  
 O Thou, if tongue may yet beseech,  
 Near to Thine awful Feet let reach  
 This broken spikenard of my speech !*



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